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R. Flexman,

SURVEY  
OF  
Infant Baptism,  
AND THE  
Mode of BAPTIZING:  
IN A  
LETTER  
TO A  
Gentleman at LONDON.

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By *Joseph Stokes*, Minister of the Gospel,  
at *Horsham* in *Sussex*.

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## L E T T E R to a Gentleman, &amp;c.

S I R,

**T**HIS plain from *Luke* 12. 47, 48. That tho' Ignorance of our Duty may extenuate, yet it won't excuse our Non-performance of it ; permit me therefore to represent to you your Duty in one Instance, which, at present, you are unacquainted with, I mean that of Dedicating your Children to Christ in Baptism.

The Arguments I shall produce on this Occasion are,

I. That the Children of Professors are included in the Covenant of Grace with their Parents.

II. That Baptism succeeds Circumcision.

III. That 'twas Customary with the Jews to Baptize their Profelytes Children.

IV. That the Commission to Baptize, *Mat.* 28. 19. must intend Children as well as the Adult.

V. That there is more Reason to Conclude, That the Apostles did Baptize Children, than that they did not.

VI. That 'twas the general Practice of the Primitive Church to Baptize Infants.

More Arguments might be produc'd, but these are  
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sufficient

sufficient to Dissipate the Clouds that obscure Infant Baptism.

I. *Arg.* Infants are to be baptized, because the Children of Professors are included in the Covenant of Grace with their Parents.

That Children are thus in Covenant, is evident,

From God's requiring the Children to appear before him with their Parents, and that too upon the most solemn Occasions, See *2 Chron.* 20. 13. *Joel* 2. 15, 16, 17. Now what can be the meaning of this, but that Children were in Covenant with their Parents? We are told, *2 Chron.* 8. 11. That *Pharaoh's* Daughter must not dwell in the House of *David*, because the Places were holy, whereunto the Ark of the Lord had come. And *Acts* 21. 28. The *Greeks* are said to pollute the Temple by entering into it: Thus were Persons, not in Covenant, to be kept at a distance from the Place of God's Worship: And can we suppose therefore, that if Children were not in Covenant, God would have them summon'd to appear before him in his Temple, and that too upon the most solemn Occasions? Especially considering, that if they were not concern'd with their Parents in those religious Assemblies, their Absence would be preferable to their Presence; for they might, in some degree interrupt the Devotion of their Parents.

But to what purpose should I insist any longer on this, since the Scriptures expressly declare, That Children are in Covenant with their Parents? See, for Instance, what is said, *Gen.* 17. 7, 8. I know some would fain evade this Text, by pretending that the Covenant here spoken of is not that of Grace.

Let us therefore examine, whether it be the Covenant of Grace or no.

'Tis certain that *Jer.* 31. 33. speaks of the Covenant of Grace; and the Principal part of it is, God's promising to be their God: And is there not the very same Promise in *Gen.* 17. 7, 8.? Now as there is such a sweet

Harmony



Harmony between these two Texts, why must they be suppos'd to speak of different Covenants? Is it possible to say, the one is the Covenant of Grace, and the other is not, without depreciating the Covenant of Grace? For what is this, in effect, but the making some other Covenant equal to that of Grace?

*Rom. 4. 11.* may also satisfy us, That the Covenant here spoken of is that of Grace; for if Circumcision, the Seal of this Covenant was a Seal of the Righteousness of Faith, what other Apprehension can we form of this Covenant, but that of Grace? We must be very great Strangers to our Bibles, if we think to find the Righteousness of Faith, even that whereby *Abraham* was Justify'd, in any other Covenant than that of Grace.

*Gal. 3. 17.* may also teach us, That this Covenant here spoken of is that of Grace; for if the Covenant made with *Abraham* was Confirmed of God in Christ, what other Covenant can it be, but that of Grace?

But to call in but one Evidence more, about the Covenant made with *Abraham*: If it cannot be the Covenant some have fancied it to be, I hope it may be acknowledged the Covenant of Grace.

But the Unhappiness is, That they who won't have it a Covenant of Grace, are not agreed, what to call it. Some would have it a Covenant of Works, others, a Covenant whereby God made over the Land of Canaan to the Posterity of *Abraham*.

It cannot be a Covenant of Works; for, as *Abraham* was then a Believer, and consequently Interested in the Covenant of Grace, is it at all probable, That God would run him back again into the Covenant of Works? And besides, What Comfort could *Abraham* take, in God's Promise to be a God unto him, and to his Seed after him, according to the Covenant of Works? for that insists upon perfect and perpetual Obedience, in order to God's being our God. *Gal. 3. 10.* So that *Abraham* had Reason to Deprecate such a Promise as this; and with

Tears lament his own and Posterity's forlorn Condition.

And as this may convince us 'twas no Covenant of Works: So

Neither can it be a Covenant, whereby God made over the Land of *Canaan* to the Posterity of *Abraham*; for the Promise of *Canaan* is only an Appendix, or a less considerable Part of this Covenant, *Gen.* 17. 7, 8. being somewhat Parallel to *Mat.* 6. 33. In the One there is a general Promise of earthly Things, in the Other, a particular Promise of *Canaan*.

That this is an impartial Account of the Promise of *Canaan*, is evident from what has been already hinted of Circumcision, the Seal of this Covenant, That it was a Seal, not of *Canaan*, but of the Righteousness of Faith.

To which let me add; May not the dreadful Sanction affixed to the Seal of this Covenant, *Gen.* 17. 14. incline us to believe, something greater than *Canaan* was offer'd to *Abraham* and his Posterity? And, 'tis certain, the *Jews* thought so, or else they would never have made Circumcision a necessary Term of Salvation, as *Acts* 15. 1.

But to bring this Debate to a final Conclusion, let *Rom.* 3. v. 1, 2. be consulted: That Scripture may discover to all who do not obstinately shut their Eyes against the Truth, That the Promise of *Canaan* was only an Appendix, or a less considerable Part of this Covenant; for having in v. 1. put these Interrogations, *What Advantage then hath the Jew? or What Profit is there of Circumcision?* In the 2d. v. he answers, *Much every way: Chiefly, Because that unto them were committed the Oracles of God.* The Apostle, you see, don't make the Promise of *Canaan*, but something greater, the Chief or principal Part of this Covenant.

And thus have I endeavour'd to set the Covenant, *Gen.* 17. 7, 8. v. in a clear Light: And as there is such a sweet Harmony between this and that of Grace; as Circumcision, the Seal of this Covenant, was a Seal of the Righteousness of Faith; as this Covenant was confirmed of  
God

God in Christ; and as this Covenant cannot be that of Works, nor a Covenant whereby God made over the Land of *Canaan* to the Posterity of *Abraham*, therefore it must be the Covenant of Grace.

Thus apparent is it, From God's requiring the Children to appear before him with their Parents, and that too upon the most solemn Occasions; as also from the express Declaration of *Gen. 17. 7, 8.* That Children were once in Covenant with their Parents.

And were they once, and are they not so still? Is there one Text, from the First Chapter of *Genesis* to the last of *Revelations*, that has a Syllable of their being cast out of Covenant? Our Lord, I'm sure, had no hand in this Ejection, for he, by his coming, extended the Pales of the Church, having broken down the Middle Wall of Partition, which had long separated the *Jews* and *Gentiles*: And what did Christ break down the Middle Wall of Partition, from between the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to erect it between Parents and their Children? Alas! Why must poor Children be excluded now any more than formerly? Is there not room enough for them in the Church, since the calling of the *Gentiles*? Or have they forfeited their Privilege by some new Crime? Or what other way can we account for the Disfranchisement of Children? But, leaving such Expostulations, let us open our *New Testament*, and we shall soon perceive, That as Children were, so are they still in Covenant with their Parents.

Several Texts might be produc'd on this occasion, but these two are sufficient, *Mark 10. 13, 14, 15, 16.* and *1 Cor. 7. 14.*

As to the former, every Sentence is an Argument, That our Lord look'd upon Children as in Covenant with their Parents.

Christ was much displeased with his Disciples, because they had rebuked those that brought young Children to him.

Christ

Christ gives this in Charge to his Disciples, *Suffer the little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not.*

Christ declares to his Disciples the indisputable Right Children had of coming unto him, *For of such is the Kingdom of God.*

Christ would have his Disciples understand, how greatly they were mistaken, in supposing Children unfit to come unto him; whereas, *Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God, as a little Child, he shall not enter therein.*

Christ having compassionately pleaded the Cause of Children, gives a yet sweeter Demonstration, how dear they were to him: *He took them up in his Arms, put his Hands upon them, and Blessed them.*

Behold! What Tenderneſs! What Affection! What Concern! What a vast Reſpect does our Lord here diſcover for Children! Does this Language, or do theſe Actions repreſent Chriſt as one, who, by his coming, would caſt Children out of Covenant? Is it poſſible for any to read ſeriouſly theſe Premiſes, and not draw this fair Concluſion, Children are in Covenant?

And as our Lord, while on Earth, fully declar'd, That Children are in Covenant; ſo after his Aſcenſion, the Apoſtle Paul expreſſly declar'd as much, *1 Cor. 7. 14. For the unbelieving Husband is ſanctify'd by the Wife, and the unbelieving Wife is ſanctify'd by the Husband; elſe were your Children unclean, but now are they holy, i. e. Elſe were your Children out of Covenant, but now are they in Covenant.*

This is a juſt Interpretation of this Text, becauſe conſidering the Subject the Apoſtle is upon, there is a great deal of force in the words *Unclean* and *Holy*, taken in this ſenſe: But if you ſtrip them of this, and impoſe ſome other, 'twill be no eaſie Task to clear them of Impertinence; and I'm ſure no part of Scripture can fall under that Imputation.

And beſides, 'tis no unuſual thing in Scripture, to have  
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the Terms *Unclean* and *Holy*, signify Persons out of Covenant, and in Covenant, *Isai.* 52. 1. *Acts* 10. 28. *Deut.* 7. 6. and 14. 2, 21.

By this time, I hope, you are convinced, That the Children of Professors being included in the Covenant of Grace with their Parents, is no *Chymera*, but a comfortable Truth attested by the *Old* and *New Testaments*.

And what Inference then can be more solid than this, *Therefore Infants are to be Baptized?*

But if there yet remain any Scruple upon your Mind, I would advise you to inform your self from *Gen.* 17. 10. from the Necessity of Baptism, and from the Practice of your own Party, *That if Infants be in Covenant, they are to be baptiz'd.*

As to *Gen.* 7. 10. God commands, *That they who were in Covenant, should receive the Initiating Seal of the Covenant.* And *What God hath joined together; let not Man put asunder.*

As to the Necessity of Baptism; (I mean not the absolute Necessity of it to Salvation; for that Notion is Uncharitable and Superstitious) But by the Necessity of Baptism I mean, That as Children are in Covenant, so 'tis necessary they should be baptized, in order to remove all Doubts of their being in Covenant, and to distinguish them from the Children of Infidels.

There was indeed no such Necessity of Professors Children having a Seal of the Covenant, during that Age of the Church, which was from the Fall to God's appointment of Circumcision, because none in Covenant had a Seal: But, as ever since that, Persons in Covenant have had one, if not two Seals, it may create a Jealousy, whether Professors Children be in Covenant, or whether there be any difference betwen them and the Children of Infidels, except Professors Children have a Seal of the Covenant.

As to the Practice of your own Party; are not they willing to Baptize any, as soon as they can discern plau-



sible Evidences of their being in Covenant? And ought not then the Children of Professors to be Baptiz'd, since we can discern in God's Word real Evidences of their being in Covenant?

If it be objected, why may not Children have the Lord's Supper, since that, as well as Baptism, is a Seal of the Covenant?

I answer: Suppose I had been now pleading for Children sucking their Mothers Breasts, would it be ingenuous to object, why may they not participate of every Dish on their Mother's Table? Or does it follow, That because Students are Matriculated at their admission into the University, that therefore they immediately take their Degrees? And why then may not Children be Baptiz'd, tho' they be not brought to the Lord's Table? 'Tis confess'd, They are both Seals of the Covenant; but with this difference, That one is the initiating Seal, the other the confirming Seal; That to receive the one, 'tis sufficient to be in Covenant; but to receive the other, Persons must not only be in Covenant, but *Do it in Remembrance of Christ, Luke 22. 19. 1 Cor. 11. 24, 25.* which Children are not capable of doing. But however, as Milk is sufficient for Children 'till they are capable of stronger Nourishment; and Matriculation for Students, till they become Graduates, so is Baptism sufficient for us, till we are fit to be Communicants.

Thus have I, with as much Brevity and Perspicuity as I could, set before you, That Infants are to be Baptized, because the Children of Professors are included in the Covenant of Grace with their Parents.

II. Arg. *Infants are to be Baptiz'd, because Baptism Succeeds Circumcision.*

All that is necessary to do here, is, To prove that Baptism succeeds (*i. e.* is substituted in the stead of) Circumcision; for as Infants were Circumcised, I hope you will freely

freely grant, they are to be Baptiz'd, if Baptism succeeds Circumcision.

To clear up this Truth to you then, let it be consider'd,

1. That if Baptism don't succeed Circumcision, the Privilege of the Christian Church, as to Infants, is not so much as equal to that of the Jewish; for Circumcision was a great Privilege, as the Apostle declares, *Rom. 2. 25.* and 3. 1, 2. And what Equivalent has Christ given the Christian Church for Circumcision, if Baptism be not the Equivalent?

'Tis certain, an Equivalent in this Instance was very Requisite; for

1. Without such an Equivalent, the Infants of Professors enjoy no external Privilege above the Infants of Infidels.

2. Without such an Equivalent, Childrens being in Covenant will be rendred obscurer under the Gospel, than it was under the Law.

3. Without such an Equivalent, the *Jews* would have been much more prejudic'd against Christ, for 'tis well known how fond they were of Circumcision; had this therefore been taken away, and no Equivalent given, they would have been apt to make some such Remarks as these:

Can he intend my Happiness, that would deprive my Children of their only external Privilege? Or shall I be so cruel a Parent, as to embrace Christianity, when by continuing a Jew my Children will have a Seal of the Covenant, but by turning Christian they must have none? Especially this might prejudice such Jews against Christ, as had Children, and might have more; for some such Thoughts as these might start up in their Breasts.

What, have my present Children receiv'd a Seal of the Covenant, and shall my future Children have none? How shall I without Tears, see my Children together, when some of them have the Seal of God's Covenant, and others of them have nothing to distinguish them from the Children of Infidels?

4. Without such an Equivalent, the Glory of God, and the Comfort of Parents and Children would sustain a considerable Loss by the Abolishment of Circumcision; for Circumcision had an happy tendency to advance the Glory of God, and the comfort of Parents and Children.

To mention some Instances.

Circumcision had an happy tendency to advance God's Glory,

As it intimated the Impurity of our Nature, That we were *shapen in Iniquity, and in sin did our Mothers conceive us*; for were we born into this World absolutely Pure, we should have had the Divine Image upon us, and consequently we should have wanted no other Seal, especially not that painful one of Circumcision.

As it discovered the gracious Disposition of God, and the strong Inclination he had to be reconciled, in and thro' Christ, to the Apostate Race of *Adam*: That tho' they were cast out to the lothing of their Person in the Day that they were Born, that yet his Eye pitied them, his Heart had compassion upon them, and when he passed by them, and saw them polluted in their own Blood, he said unto them *Live*: That tho' they had defac'd his Image, and therefore he might justly disown them, that yet he was willing to Mark them again for his own.

As it more solemnly obliged Parents to Educate their Children religiously; for having devoted them to God in that Ordinance, they were perfidious if they had not a due regard to Educate them for God.

As it gave Parents an excellent Argument wherewith to reprove Sin, or excite Holiness in their Children: For how awakening must this Language of a Parent be?

What! my Child, have you been devoted to God, and will you serve the Devil! Or will you wear the Livery of an holy God, and not follow Holiness? After your being marked for Heaven, will you throw your self into Hell, and even a hotter part of it than Infidels shall have.

As it might prompt Parents to bewail every Neglect

of

of their Childrens Souls. I very early, may the Parent say, gave my Child up to the Lord; and then the Lord said unto me, as *Pharaoh's Daughter* to the Mother of *Moses*, *Take this Child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy Wages.* 'Twas my Duty therefore, to teach my Child the Fear of the Lord, both by Expressions and Example; I ought frequently to have prayed with, and for my Child; to have taken my Child with me to the House of God; to have reprov'd and corrected my Child for Faults which deserved it: Those and the like things the Lord required of me, and the Salvation of my Child's Soul demanded, and I solemnly promised; but what have I done for the Soul of my Child? Alas! how shamefully have I neglected it!

As it might have an Influence upon Parents to be concerned for their own Souls; for their devoting their Children to God in this Ordinance, would remember them of their own being devoted; and the Obligation they were brought under to take care of their Children's Souls, supposed the same, or greater Obligation, to take care of their own Souls.

As it brought Children under the earliest and strongest Engagements to be the Lord's. The Devil begins as early as he can with Children, to list them under his Banner; and 'tis dreadful to consider, how early he has some times done this; for have we not heard Children lisping out the Devil's Language, before they have learned to speak plain. But now, by this Ordinance, Children were first listed under the Lord's Banner, and could not desert it without being extremely perfidious. And when Satan, or his Agents at any time set upon them to engage in Sin, they might silence their Adversaries, and put them to flight, by saying, we were in our Infancy entred into the Lord's Service, and took an Oath of Allegiance to him, we are therefore intirely and eternally at his command, what he orders we must do, what he forbids we must forbear, and so we dare not listen to your Insinuations,

As



As it might hasten Repentance after the Commission of Sin. Alas! might Persons say, How unbecoming one in Covenant with God, did I act, when in such and such Instances I sinned against him! could any thing be more provoking, than to violate the Covenant while I bear the Seal of the Covenant! What a sad Inconsistency is this, to subscribe my self the Lord's, and yet favour his inveterate Enemy! Shall not my Soul be troubled for these things? Shall I not hasten to my God, that I may blush and confess my Sin, and have God again reconciled to me?

In these and the like Instances, say, had Circumcision an happy tendency to advance God's Glory?

And then Circumcision tended to the Comfort of Parents,

As it gave Parents more comfortable Hopes of such of their Children as died in their Infancy; for they might fairly conclude, That as their Infancy was no Bar to their receiving the Seal of God's Covenant, so neither would that, of it self, be any Bar to their Salvation.

As it might render Parents more easy to die from their Children; for they might thus comfort themselves,

Tho' we leave our Children behind us, yet as God has put his Seal upon them, so we hope, he will be a Father unto them, and provide Spiritual and Temporal Blessings for them.

As it might comfort Parents in the pious Education of their Children; for they might reasonably expect God's assistance in the Education of his sealed ones.

And then Circumcision tended to the comfort of Children, as it declared, That their earliest Sacrifices would be very pleasing and acceptable unto God; That he would take Notice of them, and with pleasure behold them, at his House, or upon their Knees, or looking into his Word.

As it led Children to depend upon God for Counsel, in their tender unexperienc'd Age; and for strength to fortify them against the numerous Temptations, unto which their Youth expos'd them.

As

As it invited Children upon their sincere Repentance, to be Supplicants at the Throne of Grace for Pardon; for their being sealed might satisfy them of God's Willingness to be reconciled to them, when truly Penitent.

As it might support Children at the Decease of their Parents; for having God's Seal upon them, they might hope God would, upon all occasions, shew himself their tender Parent.

In these and the like Instances, had Circumcision a happy tendency to advance the Glory of God, and the comfort of Parents and Children.

And here might I run over the same Particulars, and shew you, That Baptism is yet more subservient to these great Purposes; and consequently, if Baptism be the Equivalent for Circumcision, these Advantages are continued, but otherwise, they are intirely lost; and certainly, 'tis much more for the Honour of Jesus Christ, to believe they are continued by Baptism.

But, perhaps, you will here object, How seldom does Infant-Baptism advance the glory of God, or the comfort of Parents and Children? What Parents among the Heathen can be more careless of their Childrens Education, than many of those who have their Infants baptiz'd? Or what Children can be wickedder or more irreligious than many of those who were baptiz'd in their Infancy?

To which I answer, That such a Character of Parents and Children is bitterly to be lamented, and Wo to such Parents and Children; for God will severely avenge himself of them, except they repent.

But however, this does not at all affect the Argument we are upon; for whilst Circumcision was the Seal of the Covenant, Parents and Children were guilty of the same Crime:

And besides, Is it not as melancholy a Truth; that many who attend upon the Word, have no regard to *Phil. 1. 27. Only let your Conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ.* But compel Ministers to resume the Apostles

**Apostles Complaint, Phil. 3. 18, 19.** *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the Enemies of the Cross of Christ; whose End is Destruction, whose God is their Belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things? But must Ministers be silenc'd, because these live the reverse of the Gospel?*

And, to come yet a little nearer, are there not too many among your own Party, who are no very great Ornaments to Religion, but their Conversation, since Baptism, has been wicked, and more irreligious than some of the Heathens? and must Adult-Baptism therefore be discarded?

So that, tho' the wretched perfidiousness of many Parents and Children must be greatly lamented, yet this does no way affect the Argument we are upon: After all, we may still insist, That the glory of God, and the comfort of Parents and Children are concerned, That Baptism should be the Equivalent for Circumcision.

Thus have I shewed you, That Baptism must succeed Circumcision, or else the Christian Church, as to Infants, is not so much as equal to that of the Jewith in Privilege, tho' 'tis certain, an Equivalent for Circumcision was very Requisite.

But to proceed,

2. Let it also be consider'd, That the Lord's Supper, which is one of the Sacraments of the *New-Testament*, succeeds the Passover, which was one of the Sacraments of the *Old-Testament*: And may we not fairly conclude then, That Baptism, which is the other Sacrament of the *New-Testament*, succeeds Circumcision, which was the other Sacrament of the *Old-Testament*?

3. It deserves also our consideration, That, as Persons were solemnly introduc'd into the Jewith Church by Circumcision, so are they solemnly introduc'd into the Christian Church by Baptism.

4. It may also be very useful to consider, *Col. 2. 11, 12.*

To



To the right understanding of which, it must be noted, That the Apostles Design in this Chapter was, to guard against the Errors of false and insinuating Teachers; one of which Errors was, That none could be saved except they were Circumcised: And 'tis against this Error that these 11, 12 Verses are directed.

In the 11th v. The Apostle takes notice, that his *Colossians* were inwardly Circumcis'd, thereby intimating, that the meer Absence of external Circumcision could never exclude them from Salvation. But then in the 12th v. he prosecutes the Matter yet closer, and takes notice that his *Colossians* are not destitute even of an *external Seal of the Covenant*, for tho' they were not Circumcised, yet they were Baptized.

This is, I humbly conceive, the Apostles Mind in these Verses: And as the Apostle Answers the Objection of his *Colossians* not being Circumcised, by declaring *they were Baptized*; what is this, in effect, but a Declaration, That Baptism succeeds Circumcision?

To sum up the Evidence therefore of Baptism's succeeding Circumcision. As this was necessary, in order to make the Privilege of the Christian Church, as to Infants, at least equal to that of the Jewish; as the Lord's Supper succeeds the Passover: As Persons were solemnly introduc'd into the Jewish Church by Circumcision, and into the Christian Church by Baptism; and as the Apostle, *Col. 2. 11, 12.* intimates, That Baptism succeeds Circumcision; so, how can we refuse our Assent to this Truth? Will any call us credulous for this? Certainly nothing can be more Unjust; for, with what valid Arguments is the Affirmative supported; whereas the Negative has only a Fallacy or two to appear for it.

One Fallacy is this,

Why are not Infants Baptiz'd on the 8th Day, if Baptism succeed Circumcision?

To which I answer, The 8th Day was a Circumstance which ceased with Circumcision, as the 14th Day of the first Month ceased with the Passover: And the 8th Day



may instruct us, not unnecessarily to defer the Baptism of our Children, yet we dare not confine our selves to that Day; for this would expose us to the Apostles Reprehension, *Gal. 4. 10.* And besides, Why may not Baptism succeed Circumcision, tho' we don't confine our selves to the 8th Day, as well as your Party pretend to imitate Christ's Baptism, without confining themselves to the 30th Year? Especially, considering, they are under equal Obligation to imitate Christ in this Particular, as in that they insist on; for Christ was not Baptiz'd when Adult, for our imitation, but, because he could not be Baptiz'd in his Infancy; for Baptism, as a Christian Ordinance, was not then Instituted, as all must confess who know, That the first Commission to Baptize was deliver'd to *John the Baptist*, who was Born but 6 Months before our Lord.

But, to proceed to another Fallacy, which is often urged against Baptism's succeeding Circumcision

Are not Males and Females Baptiz'd? whereas the Males only were Circumcis'd.

To which I answer:

Circumcision was a Seal which Females were incapable of receiving, tho' not of improving; for they might learn by the Circumcision of the Males, that they themselves were born in Covenant, as being descended from the same or the like Parents. But now under the Gospel, Christ was pleas'd to give Males and Females equal satisfaction of their being in Covenant, and Baptism was made the New Seal, which both Sexes are equally capable of Receiving.

But that Females being Baptized, should be urged against Baptism's succeeding Circumcision, is, I confess, somewhat surprizing.

At the Union of *England* and *Scotland*, the Antient Seal of *England* was laid aside, and a new Seal appointed, which should equally serve the united Kingdoms: But will any say, That this new Seal don't succeed the Antient Seal of *England*, because *Scotland* is equally concern'd with this, and was not with the orher? And why then may not Baptism succeed Circumcision, tho' Females are Baptiz'd, and were not Circumcis'd.

Thus

Thus have I expos'd these Fallacies, which some would interpose, to hinder our Belief of Baptism's succeeding Circumcision.

I shall now close this Argument with observing, That 'tis thro' meer Inadvertency, Persons, in the Dispute of Infant Baptism, have recourse to such Texts as *Mat. 3. 6. 28. 19. Acts 2. 38. 8. 37, &c.* for those Texts speak of the Adult; and we faithfully take our Measures from them, as often as we are concern'd with the Adult. We will not, we dare not Baptize the Adult, 'till they have been first taught, and give Signs of Faith and Repentance. But what is all this to Infant Baptism? Were not Instruction, and Signs of Faith and Repentance the Terms of Circumcision under the Law to the Adult? And yet none of these were previously necessary to the Circumcision of Infants: And as Baptism succeeds Circumcision, therefore, tho' these be the Terms of our Baptizing the Adult, yet we may, and ought to Baptize Infants, without insisting upon any thing of that Nature.

But, to proceed to another Argument for Infant Baptism,  
III. Arg. *Infants are to be Baptiz'd, because 'twas customary with the Jews to Baptize their Profelytes Children.*

That there was such a Custom among the Jews, None can deny, who are acquainted with their Books.

The Original of this Custom is thought to be *Numb. 15. 15, 16.* This Text, says the Jews, obliged them to deal with their Profelytes, and their Children, as God dealt with the Israelites upon their leaving Idolatrous *Egypt*: Now God, they say, Baptized the Israelites on that occasion, and the Apostle seems to intimate as much, *1 Cor. 10. 1, 2.* And therefore the Jews Baptized all such as, under the Law, were Gentiles, but, forsaking Idolatry, embraced the Worship of the true God: And together with the Parents, the Children were Baptiz'd.

This is a brief Account of this Jewish Custom.

Now 'tis the Opinion of the Learned, That the Christian Sacrament of Baptism was taken from this Custom of the Jews; for Circumcision being to be laid aside and a

New Seal to be substituted in its stead, Baptism was upon several Accounts most fit to be the New Seal, and therefore Christ made it so.

As then, Baptism was thus taken from the Jewish Custom of Baptizing Profelytes and their Children, who can forbid Water that our Infants should not be Baptiz'd as well as theirs?

IV. Arg. *Infants are to be Baptiz'd, because the Commission to Baptize, Mat. 28. 19. must intend Children as well as the Adult.*

There is nothing more common, than to insult us with this Commission: But, upon a calm Inquiry, 'twill appear much to our Advantage.

I shall not, I hope, be thought unreasonable, if I demand, That the Commission be taken in that Sense which was most Intelligible to the Apostles: And if so, the Commission must intend Children as well as the Adult; for the Apostles, being familiarly acquainted with the Custom of their Nation to baptize Profelytes and their Children, so, what Construction would they more readily put upon the Commission than this?

That they must go and preach the Gospel to all Nations; and when any were converted, they must Baptize them; and if any of the Converts had Children, they were to be baptized with their Parents.

To illustrate this Matter, suppose I should engage some Ministers of my Acquaintance to undertake a Voyage to the Indies, and, upon their departure, should deliver them a Commission in these Terms, *Go ye therefore, and teach all the Indian Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

How, pray, would these Ministers proceed in the Indies? Would not they first teach the Natives the Principles of the Christian Religion, and then Baptize their Converts together with their Infants? But, suppose some should charge them with exceeding their Commission, because there is no express mention of Infants there; would not they immediately defend themselves by saying, 'Tis no matter whe-

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ther they are express'd, since we know that Infants were intended in the Commission? For 'tis customary to baptize Infants in *England*, and consequently, had not he who gave us the Commission, intended we should baptize Infants, he would either expressly have excepted Infants in the Commission, or upon some other occasion have intimated, that we should not baptize Infants.

Why, even so, as to the Commission our Lord gave his Disciples; if he intended they should baptize Infants, the Commission is in plain and clear Terms, because the Apostles were familiarly acquainted with the Custom of their Nation, to baptize Protelytes and their Children: But, if our Lord intended not to have Infants baptiz'd, the Commission is obscure, and not so intelligible; and an express Exception of Infants was necessary in the Commission it self; or upon some other occasion Christ would have intimated, That Infants should not be baptiz'd: But nothing like this has ever yet been met with in God's Word; and till such a Discovery be made, we dare not but believe, That Infants are as fully intended in this Commission, as if they had been expressly mentioned there.

And let it not be thought, That we so strenuously insist upon Infants being intended in the Commission, thro' fear of being Destitute of a command in Scripture for Infant-Baptism; for every Text of Scripture that commands us to *be obedient to Christ in all things*, is, in effect, a command to dedicate our Infants to Christ in Baptism; and besides, as Baptism succeeds Circumcision, so, what are the Commands in Scripture to Circumcise Infants, but as so many Commands to Christians to baptize their Infants?

'Tis nothing therefore but a fervent Love to Truth, that makes us insist upon it, That Infants are intended in the Commission, and we may with the greater satisfaction insist on it, because they who suppose Infants are not intended in the Commission, have hitherto said but little to Exclude them.

Some indeed fancy they can exclude Infants out of the Commission, by saying, That the Word *Teach* is put before Bapti-



**Baptizing:** But, as has been already hinted, the Word *Teach*, has reference only to the Adult, That they should be first taught before they were Baptiz'd. And besides, this way of arguing will be as fatal to them and their Children, as to us; for if none must be baptiz'd till they are first taught, because in *Mat. 28. 19.* *Teach* is put before Baptizing; why may not we argue, That Infants must be baptized, before the *Baptism of Repentance for the remission of Sins* is preached to them, because in *Mark 1. 4.* *Baptize* is put before *Preach*? and why should the Word *Teach*, being put before *Baptize*, in *Mat. 28. 19.* any more exclude Infants the Commission, than *believeth and is baptized*, being put before *saved*, in *Mark 16. 16.* should exclude Infants Salvation?

Let such therefore be perswaded, never to pretend this way to exclude Infants the Commission, except they have a mind to destroy their beloved *Hypothesis*, and to despair of their Infants Salvation.

V. Arg. *Infants are to be baptized, because there is more Reason to conclude, That the Apostles did baptize Children, than that they did not.*

The *New-Testament* in several Places acquaints us, That the Apostles baptized Families: And who can, without presumption, say, There were no Children in any of those Families? In all Cases where we cannot have better satisfaction, 'tis safest and most prudent to acquiesce in that which is most probable. In the present Case therefore, the Scripture being silent, whether there were any Children in these Families or no, we must acquiesce in that which is most probable.

Now, as more Families have Children, than not, so is it more probable, that, at least some of these Families had Children; and consequently, There is more reason to conclude, That the Apostles did baptize Children, than that they did not.

If any ask, why the *New-Testament* gives us no express Instances of infant-Baptism?

1 Answer: Because 'twas not necessary; for the greatest number

number of Learned and Pious Christians can discern Infant-Baptism in the *New-Testament*, without such express Instances, and if some Persons will be more curious, and won't be contented without such express Instances, God is not oblig'd to gratify their Curiosity.

But to Cure these Persons of their Curiosity, if possible, I desire their Resolution of the following Queries.

1. Are not the express Instances of Infant-Circumcision in the *Old Testament*, tantamount to express Instances of Infant-Baptism in the *New-Testament*, since Baptism succeeds Circumcision?

2. Why should it seem strange, That the *New-Testament* gives us no express Instances of Infant-Baptism, since the *Old-Testament*, if I mistake not, has but one express Instance of Infant-Circumcision; viz. *Isaac Gen. 21. 4.* Tho' the *Old-Testament* contains the Principal Transactions of about 1500 Years after Circumcision was instituted, whereas in the *New-Testament* we have the Principal Transactions of but a few Years?

3. Can they suppose, That Children were never present at the Christian Assemblies in the Apostles days? and yet what express Instances be there of this in the *New-Testament*?

4. Is it not as easy to find in the *New-Testament* express Instances of Infant-Baptism, as of Womens approaching the Lord's Table?

5. Why we may not, with the same Air of Assurance, demand express Instances in the *New-Testament*, of the Adult Baptism of such as were born of Christian Parents; and make the profound silence of the *New-Testament* on this account an Evidence, That such were not Baptized Adult, but in their Infancy?

But leaving such curious Persons to resolve these Queries, I shall proceed to the last Argument I have, at present, to offer for Infant-Baptism, *Viz.*

VI. Arg. *Infants are to be Baptized, because 'twas the general Practice of the Primitive Church to baptize Infants.*

I am far from having such a superstitious Veneration for Antiquity,

Antiquity, as to subscribe to every thing, that pleas'd few or many of the Primitive Christians; for several Errors crept in among Christians, even while the Apostles were living on the Earth. But however, we may in some Cases, appeal to the Primitive Christians; and their Practice, when coincident with other and better Evidences, may be of some moment.

My intended Brevity won't permit me to transcribe those Passages of the Fathers, which speak of the Baptism of Infants, as the general Practice of the Primitive Church; and I may easily be excus'd; since a Learned Author has lately favoured the World with a large Collection of Passages on this Subject. Instead therefore of transcribing the Fathers, I shall content my self with transcribing a Remark made by *Du-Pin*, who was as intimately conversant with the Fathers, as perhaps ever any in the World. 'Tis to be met with in his *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. I. Page 80. Edit. London. 1693. In the Life of *Tertullian*, he is taking notice of the Errors *Tertullian* held, and, in particular, that of his being, in some sence against Infant-Baptism, and on this occasion *Du-Pin* gives us this Remark.

This Error which relates to the Baptism of Infants, is particular to *Tertullian* alone, and we shall not find any of the Ancients speaking after the same manner.

This Remark, if just, puts it beyond all contradiction, That it was the general Practice of the Primitive Church to Baptize Infants: And, for my own part, I look upon this as a just Remark, and none ought to censure it, till they are able to confute it.

I with greater pleasure mention the Practice of the Primitive Church in baptizing Infants, because among other invidious and indecent Expressions, wherewith some have dared to insult Infant-Baptism, it has also been confidently stiled a Modern and Popish Invention.

Thus have I, Sir, finished what I propos'd, in order to Represent to you your Duty, to dedicate your Children to Christ in Baptism.

But as some of your Party are displeased with us, not only



only for baptizing Infants, but because we don't Dip when we Baptize, therefore I shall not refuse to give you all the Satisfaction I can in this Particular also.

And to that End I shall,

1. Convince you, That 'tis not so easy to find Immersion or Dipping in the *New-Testament*, as some have fancied.

2. Shew you, That suppose the Apostles sometimes Dipt in Baptism, yet they also, at other times, baptized without Dipping.

3. Demonstrate that the Lord Jesus Christ approves of our Mode of Baptism.

1. I am to convince you that it is not so easy to find Immersion or Dipping in the *New-Testament*, as some have fancied.

And here let me desire you to consider,

1. That 'tis no where in the *New-Testament* expressly said, That *John* the Baptist, or the Apostles, or any other Ministers of Christ Dipt, when they baptized, *Acts* 8.38, 39. bids the fairest of any Text : But however, 'tis certain, that is not exprefs; for *Philip* was not then Dipt, and yet as much is said of him as of the Eunuch, about going down into the Water, and coming up out of the Water. So that all that this Text expressly says is, That *Philip and the Eunuch went down both into the Water* : But how deep they went, or how *Philip* baptized the *Eunuch*, whether by Sprinkling or Dipping, this Text is silent.

2. That the Inferences, some would draw from Scripture to support Dipping, are not satisfactory.

They would infer from *John* 3. 23. That *John* the Baptist Dipt when he baptized.

But this Inference is not satisfactory ; for Geographers tell us, that there are none but shallow Rivulets in those Parts ; and if so, this Text, instead of favouring Immersion, does utterly overthrow it. And besides, *John* had Reasons enough to baptize where there was much Water, tho' he never Dipt ; for how could his vast Multitudes



be baptized without much Water ? Or how could the yet greater Multitudes, that commonly attended *John*, be refresh'd in that hot Region without much Water ?

They would also infer from such Texts as speak of going into the Water, when Persons were baptiz'd, that Dipping was the Mode of baptizing.

But neither is this Inference satisfactory ; for they might chuse to go into the Water a little way, when they were Baptiz'd, even tho' they were only sprinkled ; and that, because the Water was cooler and cleaner at some distance from the Shore ; or because this was most refreshing in that hot Region ; for washing the Feet was so very refreshing there, it was usually a part of the Visitors Entertainment.

These or the like Reasons for their going into the Water, may better be assign'd, than that of Dipping ; for, how could *John*, even suppose his Disciples assisted him, ever bear the Fatigue of Dipping such vast Multitudes, as were Baptiz'd ? And besides, where were their Baptismal Garments, or retiring Rooms to dress or undress ?

They would also infer from *Rom. 6. 4. Col. 2. 12. Buried with Christ in Baptism*. That Persons were dipt in Baptism.

But this Inference is as little satisfactory as the former, for 'tis no more than a Conjecture, that the Mode of Baptism is here alluded to, and a Conjecture that may Vail the Nobler and Spiritual Aims of those Words. And why in *Rom. 6.* must the Word *Buried* at *v. 4.* any more allude to the Mode of Baptism, than the Word *Planted* at *v. 5* ?

3. Let me desire you to consider, That the Scriptures seem to be against Dipping in Baptism ; for

In the *New-Testament*, where Dipping is certainly intended, not βαπτίζω, but βάπτω is used, as *Mat. 26. 23. Mark. 14. 20. Luke 16. 24. John 13. 26. Rev. 19. 13.* and what is this, but an Intimation, that Baptizing and Dipping are different things ?

The *New-Testament* also commands Decency in our Acts of Divine Worship, *1 Cor. 14. 40.* But is it decent for

for Persons to appear in the view of both Sexes, with nothing but a loose thin Gown, and in this to be embraced by the Minister, tumbled into the Water, and then haled up again?

The *New-Testament* also has made Baptism a part of the Ministerial Work, *Mat. 28. 19.* And sometimes there may be occasion to Baptize the Adult: But how few Ministers are strong enough to Dip such? What can be said therefore in this Case? Must these Ministers be excus'd as to the Administration of Baptism? or must they be excluded the Ministry? To excuse them is unaccountable, and to exclude them is barbarous; since of all the Ministerial Qualifications recorded in God's Word, I never yet could find this to be one.

That Ministers must have the strength of Porters. The best Solution therefore of this Difficulty is, That God never enjoin'd his Ministers an impossible Task; and consequently, that, tho' Baptism be from Heaven, yet Immersion is of Men.

Thus, Sir, you see, That 'tis no where expressly said in the *New Testament*; that any Dipt when they Baptiz'd; That the Inferences some would have drawn from Scripture to support Dipping, are not satisfactory; and that the Scriptures seem to be against Dipping in Baptism: And are not you hereby convinced, That 'tis not so easy to find Immersion or Dipping in the *New-Testament*, as some have fancied?

But to proceed,

2. I am to shew you, That suppose the Apostles sometimes Dipt in Baptism, yet they also, at other times, baptized without Dipping.

This will appear if it be consider'd,

1. That 'tis not to be doubted, but some of the Apostles Converts fell dangerously sick before they could be Baptized; and consequently, the Apostles Baptiz'd such without Dipping, or else left them to die without Baptism. To be baptiz'd would make their dying Condition more comfortable, and the Apostles would scarce deny them

such a Comfort ; for Baptism may be privately administered, as we have an Instance in *Philip's* baptizing the *Eunuch* ; tho' I confess, where there is an Opportunity of having it publickly administered, 'tis more for Edification,

2. That according to *Mat. 28. 19.* the Apostles were to teach, and baptize in various Parts of the World. And we may believe, that in their large Circuit, they sometimes made Converts, where 'twas impossible to dip them ; for, in some parts of the World there are no Waters deep enough ; and in other Parts, the deep Waters might be frozen up. These and the like things might sometimes render it impossible for the Apostles to dip their Converts. And can any perswade themselves, that the Apostles would leave their Converts Unbaptized ?

3. That the Apostles Baptiz'd about 3000 in part of a Day, See *Acts 2. 41.* Now that the 12 Apostles had either Time or Strength to Dip so many, is, what can never be so much as suppos'd : And yet none but they are mentioned as present on this occasion, See *Acts 2. 1, 2, 3, 4, 14, 37. v.*

Thus have I shewed you, That suppose the Apostles sometimes Dipt in Baptism, yet they also, at other times, Baptized without Dipping. We have this therefore to comfort us, under the Reflections we met with for not Dipping, That we walk in the Steps of the Apostles, who understood Baptism better than our Modern Casuists.

But however, after all that I have said against Dipping, I have this farther to add in our Defence, That, suppose the *New-Testament* had expressly told us, that every Person said there to be Baptized was Dipt, yet, even this would be no Obligation to Dip in *Great Britain*, where not only the Climate is much colder, but also the Inhabitants are less accustomed to Washing, than the *Eastern* Nations were. And this brings me to the next thing I propos'd, *Viz.*

3. To demonstrate that the Lord Jesus Christ approves of our Mode of Baptism.

'Tis said, *Mat. 12. 1, 2.* At that time Jesus went on  
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*the Sabbath day through the Corn, and his Disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the Ears of Corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold! thy Disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath-Day.*

Well, how does our Lord defend his Disciples? Why, among other things, he sharply animadverts on the Pharisees at 7. v. *But if ye had known (says Christ,) what this meaneth, I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the Guiltless.*

Thus did our Lord approve of his Disciples Act, which the Pharisees censur'd as Unlawful.

Let us compare therefore our Case with theirs, and 'twill be Demonstrated, That the Lord Jesus Christ approves of our Mode of Baptism.

What the Disciples did was suppos'd by the Pharisees to be contrary to an express Command, *Viz.* the 4th Commandment: But your Party have never yet pretended to plead an Express Command for Dipping.

What the Disciples did was, in some sense, Forreign to the Sabbath: But our Mode of Baptizing does excellently represent to us the nature of Baptism; for the Scripture speaks of Christ's Blood being sprinkled upon us, *Ezek. 36.25. Heb. 9. 13, 14. and 12. 24.* As also 1 *Pet. 1, 2.* And besides, why may not a small quantity of Water represent to us the Blood of Jesus in Baptism; as well as a small quantity of Wine, in the Lord's Supper?

Was the Disciples Act a Case of Necessity? And is not ours a greater case of Necessity? for they might have fasted till the next Day, tho' uncomfortably, without any danger of Life: But we cannot Dip in *Great Britain*, but Myriads of Lives must be expos'd. And shall not we rather dread a violation of the Sixth Commandment, than the Omission of a Mode? To say we must Dip and leave it to Christ to preserve Life and Health, is, in plain English, to bid us to be presumptuous; for why must we expect Miracles, meerly for the sake of a Mode, when we can Baptize without that Mode? And  
besides,



besides, might it not as well been urged against the Disciples, That they ought to have fasted, and to have left it to Christ to preserve them from Hunger, or the uncomfortable effects of it?

I will now appeal therefore to your own Conscience, whether, if Christ were at this Instant Personally on the Earth, and the Zealots of your Party were to bring this Charge against us for not Dipping, *Behold! they do that which is not lawful*; whether, I say, they would receive from Christ any milder Answer than this,

*But, if you had known what this meaneth, I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the Guiltless.*

Permit me now, Sir, for the help of your Memory, to contract what has been said into a few Queries, and then I will conclude.

1. Why may not the Infants of Professors be baptiz'd, since they are in Covenant; as is evident from God's requiring them to appear before him, on the most solemn Occasions; as also from several Texts both of the *Old and New Testaments*: Especially, considering, God hath joined, being in Covenant and receiving the initiating Seal, together, *Gen. 17. 10.* And it was necessary it should be so, in order to give us fuller satisfaction, That Children are in Covenant, and to distinguish them from the Children of Heathens; and your Party do the same as to the Adult?

2. Why may not Infants be Baptiz'd, since Baptism succeeds Circumcision, as is evident, because without this, the Privilege of the Christian Church, as to Infants, is not so much as equal to that of the Jewish: The Lord's Supper succeeds the Passover; Persons are solemnly introduc'd into the Christian Church by Baptism, as formerly into the Jewish by Circumcision; and *Col. 2. 11, 12.* intimates such a Succession?

3. Why

3. Why may not Infants be Baptiz'd, since the Christian Sacrament of Baptism was taken from the Jewish Custom of Baptizing Profelytes and their Children?

4. Why may not Infants be Baptiz'd, since the Commission to baptize, *Mat. 28. 19.* if taken in the sense which was most intelligible to the Apostles, must intend Infants as well as the Adult: Especially considering there is no Exception of them in that or any other Text; nor any other Reason why there should; for the Reasons commonly assign'd, would as much except Infants from Circumcision under the Law, as from Baptism under the Gospel?

5. Why may not Infants be baptiz'd; Since there is more Reason to conclude, That the Apostles did baptize Children, than that they did not; for they Baptiz'd Families, and Children are commonly amongst such?

6. Why may not Infants be Baptiz'd, since the general Practice of the Primitive Church is a concurring Evidence on this Account?

7. Whether it be so easy to find Immersion or Dipping in the *New-Testament*, as some have fancied; since 'tis no where expressly mentioned there; and the Inferences some would draw from Scripture to support it, are not satisfactory; and the Scriptures seem to be against it?

8. Whether, suppose the Apostles sometimes Dipt, yet also, at other times they did not Baptize without Dipping; since some of their Converts might fall dangerously Sick, before they were Baptiz'd; and  
other

others might live where 'twas impossible to Dip them? And, at *Jerusalem* there were about 3000 Baptized by the Apostles in part of a Day, *Acts* 2. 41.?

9. Whether *Mat.* 12. 7. don't demonstrate, That our Lord approves of Baptizing without Dipping in *Great Britain*, whatever Mode was observ'd in *Judea*, and other hot Regions?

*I am, Sir,*

*Your Humble Servant,*

J. S.

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*FINIS.*

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